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***NEWS From:***

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## **Congressman Mike Honda**

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### **Rep. Honda Amendments to Give Military Families Relief, and Save NASA Ames Program Pass House Floor**

WASHINGTON, June 11, 2003 — Today, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the passage of H.R. 2115, the Flight 100--Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act, that included amendments by **Rep. Mike Honda (D-San Jose)** that urge every U.S. airline to offer all active members of the U.S. armed forces reduced air fares, so they may more easily visit their loved ones, and an amendment to save the Aviation Safety Reporting Program based in NASA Ames Research Center. These two amendments were initially approved in the Aviation Subcommittee of the Transportation Committee on May 14, 2003.

#### **Amendment Urging Airlines to Give Military Families Relief**

This amendment, authored by **Reps. Honda and Ellen Tauscher (D-Walnut Creek)**, urges every U.S. airline to offer all members of the U.S. armed forces on active duty reduced air fares comparable to the lowest air fare for ticketed flights, in order for these soldiers to more easily visit their loved ones, and not be penalized for their unpredictable work schedules. On May 16, 2003, American Airlines listened to the call, and launched a new system-wide fare sale for travel exclusively for members of the U.S. military on active duty and their dependent family members. "The defenders of our nation and their families are more than deserving of these benefits, and I am delighted that my colleagues in Congress agree," said Rep. Honda. "American Airlines has given military families relief. Now, we would like to see all of nation's airlines to respond in kind."

Reps. Honda and Tauscher are working closely with **Blue Star Moms**, an organization based in San Ramon, Calif., comprised of mothers who have sons and daughters in the military

[www.bluestarmoms.org](http://www.bluestarmoms.org)

**Amendment to Save Aviation Safety Reporting Program based in NASA Ames**

This amendment authored by Rep. Honda authorizes \$3.4 million for the Aviation Safety Reporting System based in NASA Ames Research Center. This amendment further requires that the Federal Aviation Administration transmit to Congress a report on the long-term goals and objectives of the Aviation Safety Reporting System and how such system interrelates with other safety reporting systems of the Federal Government no later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

“I have spoken to countless pilots, mechanics, flight attendants, and airport personnel who trust the ASRS program,” said Rep. Honda. “The fact is that this program improves aviation safety, and it must be funded adequately.”

ASRS is the worldwide model for voluntary, confidential, non-punitive safety reporting. Since its inception in 1976, ASRS has received over 560,000 safety reports from active participants of the National Aviation System, including pilots, air traffic controllers, maintenance technicians, flight attendants, and airport personnel. These reports have resulted in the issuance of over 3,000 safety alerts to government agencies and industry.

The success of ASRS lies in its ability to offer confidentiality and immunity to those who submit reports on unintentional violations of federal aviation regulations. Unfortunately, the program, despite its success, is cash starved. ASRS has been flat-funded since 1997. The \$2.4 million it has received annually since 1997 has only allowed it to analyze a fraction of the total reports it receives. Last year, for example, ASRS could only evaluate 8,000 of the 38,000 reports it collected.

Although the FAA does not administer the program, it still has a strong role to play in the long-term success of ASRS. First, the FAA must fund the program at an appropriate level--\$3.4 million. Second, the FAA must better establish a vision and benchmarks for the program, and better integrate ASRS's data collection into its own safety work.